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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 000842

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: PRIVATE REACTIONS TO IRAQI ELECTIONS

REF: A. AMMAN 785

[B](#). AMMAN 772

[C](#). AMMAN 723

[D](#). AMMAN 713

Classified By: CDA David Hale for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

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SUMMARY  
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[1](#)1. (C) Reactions of post contacts to the elections in Iraq ranged from dismissive to strongly positive, with most expressing cautious optimism. Jordanians and Sunni Iraqis were predictably very concerned with the role of Sunnis in the new government. One Iraqi election candidate, currently in Amman, claims to have seen final out-of-country voting (OCV) results for Jordan that gave strong support for the Sistani-endorsed list of candidates. End Summary.

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IRAQI BUSINESSMEN "PROUD" OF ELECTIONS  
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[1](#)2. (C) In the aftermath of the January 30 elections in Iraq, emboffs have contacted several Iraqis who either reside in or frequently travel to Jordan. Representatives of the well-established Iraqi business community in Amman were almost uniformly upbeat. Several said they were "very proud" that the elections appeared fair, clean and well-organized, with one contact comparing the voting to a "national wedding." Others were more cautious in their praise, stating that the elections were a "good first step" toward a better future.

[1](#)3. (C) Tribal leader Shiekh Tariq al-Abdalah from Anbar province, who regularly shuttles between Amman and Dubai, told econoff that the elections were "very positive." He said that Sunni leaders who weren't able to come forward before are now "eager to talk" in hopes of finding a unifying path to the future. He claimed to be in close contact with other Anbar figures who are working on a strategy to re-integrate Sunnis into the political process. Abdalah was very disturbed, however, by rumors from Baghdad that Sunnis who did not participate in the elections would be shut out of government and the constitution-drafting process, saying such a move would be "very dangerous."

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JORDANIANS STRESS SUNNI ROLE  
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[1](#)4. (C) Jordanian contacts similarly had positive words for election logistics, but were often quick to point out low Sunni participation. Outspoken MP Dr. Abdur Rahim Malhas (East Banker, Amman) said the elections were organized well, but added they "did not reflect a real and full representation of the Iraqi people." Civil society leader Jamal Rifai likewise said that while the elections were "carried out successfully," they were nevertheless flawed as "a high percentage of the Iraqi people did not cast ballots." Rifai stressed that stability in Iraq could not be achieved without "real participation from Sunnis." Political analyst Oraib Rantawi commented that the elections "might be a huge step in the right direction" and that they showed that there was "a light at the end of the tunnel" to the current violence in Iraq. However, he said that no true solution would be achieved until the new government actively included those who boycotted the elections.

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A SISTANI VICTORY IN JORDAN?  
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[1](#)5. (C) Malik al-Ghaffour, an Iraqi independent candidate in the elections currently in Amman, claimed to econoff February 2 that he had seen the final OCV results for Jordan. According to Ghaffour, 26 parties and independents received most of the 20,000 plus votes cast in Jordan, with the Sistani-backed list of candidates receiving the highest total followed by Allawi's party with "significantly fewer" votes. The Chaldean and the Monarchist lists, Ghaffour said, each received about 500 votes, with the rest of the electoral field garnering fewer than 100 ballots each. Ghaffour (a secular Shia) fumed that the local "fanatics" had turned out in force for the Sistani list while he had only won about 45

votes in Jordan despite spending \$200,000 of his own money on his campaign.

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COMMENT  
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16. (C) OCV ballot counts for Jordan and other countries will not be disclosed for several days and post cannot assess the reliability of Ghaffour's claims. While King Abdullah has been strongly supportive of the Iraqi elections (ref a), many Jordanians are nervous over the prospect of a Shia-dominated Iraq.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED  
HALE